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Gun Club
A-3



Sailing
B-1



Tennis
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Lance Cpl. Regina A. Ruisi

Marines from gun three, Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, explain to members of the Marine Corps League, Camp Tarawa Detachment, the functioning of artillery and the new M777 Lightweight 155mm Howitzer when the former Marines visited the Pohakuloa Training Area March 10.

Marines welcome League members, JROTC to PTA

Lance Cpl. Regina A. Ruisi

Combat Correspondent

POHAKULOA TRAINING AREA, Hawaii — A group of little bodies in camouflage utilities and sneakers littered a field by the front gate of the Pohakuloa Training Area on the Big Island of Hawaii March 10.

Their excited, young faces stared up at the staff noncommissioned officers who gave them a safety brief, taking in everything they said about safely embarking and disembarking a seven-ton truck.

On the other side of the circle a collection of gentlemen stood wearing hats with ribbon stacks, purple hearts and the names of wars fought on foreign ter-

ritories the young cadets had only read about in books.

First Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment and 1st Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, played host to the Marine Corps League, Camp Tarawa Detachment from Waikoloa, Hawaii, and the Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps from Waiakea High School.

The cadets were given flak jackets and Kevlar helmets and boarded three seven-ton trucks with their chaperones and Marines from 3rd Marine Regiment. The Marine Corps Leaguers piled into pickup trucks, tossing their gear into the back as the entire group headed out to the artillery firing points.

"This trip should be a lot of fun," said

Heather Dansdall, vice principal, Waiakea High School. "The kids have been very excited about it for the last two weeks. I'm looking forward to watching the kids see what goes on here, giving them a taste of the real military."

The children got their first taste of the real military from Bravo Battery, 1/12. Artillerymen demonstrated the fire capacity of the new M777 Lightweight 155mm Howitzer for the cadets and former Marines, some who were former artillerymen.

"The Marine Corps is a brotherhood, and being in the Marine Corps League solidifies that it's a brotherhood that will never pass," said Jim Browne,

See LEAGUE, A-5

Camp H.M. Smith receives new fire station

Lance Cpl. Achilles Tsantarliotis

Combat Correspondent

CAMP H.M. SMITH, Hawaii. — Camp H.M. Smith finished construction on the newly developed fire station, Federal Fire Station 16, and held an opening ceremony Friday to officially launch the fully operational fire station.

The station, located next to the headquarters building, replaces the temporary station that was located away from the base, near the beginning of the road, ensuring a quick response time because of the centralized location.

"The new station will house four firefighters, a battalion chief and will service Marine Forces Pacific," said inspector Patrick Allen, acting battalion chief, Federal Fire Department. "Because of the high profile location, it was necessary to provide a centralized fire station, and about a year later — it was built."

The new station's implementation was not all smooth sailing; problems were encountered during the construction.



Lance Cpl. Achilles Tsantarliotis

Service members and federal fire station representatives unscrew the ceremonial "hose," symbolizing the beginning of the new fire station, Fire Station 16, and a united effort to protect the Camp H.M. Smith community from fire and emergency's at Camp H.M. Smith Friday.

"We encountered asbestos and other problems during the construction of the fire station," said James Pritchett, site safety officer, Bodell Construction. "Because the

old building was just that — old. But, our goal was to help protect those who defend, and we did it."

The roughly \$6.2-million fire station's mission is to pro-

vide fire and emergency services to the Camp H.M. Smith community and to ultimately protect lives, Allen said.

See STATION, A-5

Base Sgt. Maj. leaves for III MEF

Lance Cpl. Achilles Tsantarliotis

Combat Correspondent

Sergeant Maj. Daniel Fierle, base sergeant major, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, finished his duty here Tuesday, and departed to replace Sgt. Maj. Ronald Williams as III Marine Expeditionary Force sergeant major in Okinawa, Japan.

Fierle was selected for the position by a board of senior Marine Corps sergeants major.

See DEPARTS, A-2



FIERLE

Service members' remains recovered, returned home

Lance Cpl. Brian A. Marion

Combat Correspondent

HICKAM AIR FORCE BASE, Hawaii — The air grew silent Friday as Marines, airmen, Sailors, soldiers and civilians stood tranquilly, waiting for the honor guard carrying the remnants of fallen service members to begin a repatriation ceremony at Hangar 35 here.

The repatriation ceremony, the bringing or sending back of a person to his or her country or land of citizenship, happens about six times a year here and is held in honor of the service members' remains returning.

Veterans from previous wars waited alongside families, looking toward an aircraft carrying the remains of a

friend, father or sibling.

On this day the words, "You are not forgotten," echo in the minds of all present as each military formation was called to attention.

"It's great we're doing this," said Phil Chung, Korean War Veterans Association Chapter 1. "Whenever we get notification of these ceremonies, we send some of our representatives."

The ceremony began with the joint color guard marching toward the awaiting formations and stopping along a path.

Inside the cargo bay of a C-17 transport plane, shadows of movement caught the eye and four figures, one from each branch of service, emerged, holding their pre-

See REMAINS, A-5



Lance Cpl. Brian A. Marion

Service members hand a casket, containing the remains of a service member who lost his life in one of the United States' previous conflicts, to their compatriots inside a bus before joining a formation during an arrival ceremony at Hickam Air Force Base Friday.

— NEWS BRIEFS —

Easter Sunrise Service

Marine Corps Base Hawaii Chapel will conduct an Easter Sunrise Service Sunday from 6:30 to 7:30 a.m., at the Parade Field, Fort Hase Beach on Middaugh Road.

For more information, contact Chaplain David Stroud at 257-1501.

Navy/Marine Corps Relief Society Active Duty Fundraising Car Wash

The mission of the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society is to provide, in partnership with the Navy and Marine Corps, financial, educational and other assistance to members of the Naval Services of the United States, eligible family members and survivors when in need; and to receive and manage funds to administer these programs.

NMCRS will conduct a car wash to support this great cause on Wednesday and April 3rd at Kahuna's from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

For more information, contact Lt. j.g. Ben Polak at 257-8429.

HPU Now Offering More Exams On-Site Through Pearson VUE

Service members here now have more options when it comes to taking a certification or licensure exam. Hawaii Pacific University has teamed up with Pearson VUE, to start delivering computer-based certification exams such as NREMT, AMT, PTCB, CompTIA, Cisco, and many others to service members.

The exam prices vary by exam, and eligible personnel have the opportunity to be reimbursed for approved license and certification tests under the Montgomery G.I. Bill.

For more information, visit <http://www.pearsonvue.com/militarycertify> or contact Dave Terry at 534-8056.

Federal Asian Pacific American Council Meritorious Service Award

The Federal Asian Pacific American Council Meritorious Service Award is recognizing men and women who have distinguished themselves in the war on terrorism, whose activities best support the ideals of duty, honor, country or who best epitomize the core values and the citizen-warrior attributes of their service. The Department of the Navy policy requires all nominations to be submitted through the Office of EEO and Diversity Management.

For more information, contact Sonya Tuckr-Long at Sonya.tucker-long@navy.mil.

Tax Center

The Marine Corps Base Hawaii Tax Center is open. It is located in Building 279 on the second deck. The hours for the Tax Center are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednesday.

Important Phone Numbers:

On-Base Emergencies	911
Military Police	257-7114
Child Protective Service	832-5300
Fraud, Waste, Abuse & EEO	257-8852
Business Management Hotline	257-3188
Pothole & Streetlight Repair	257-2380
Base Information	449-7110
MCBH Duty Chaplain	257-7700
DEERS	257-2077

Hawaii MARINE

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Here we go again defending honor



1st Lt. Binford R. Strickland
Deputy Director, Public Affairs

“Good morning (or afternoon), Marine Corps Base Hawaii public affairs, Lieutenant Strickland,” I state when answering the phone. Then over the receiver I hear an emotional response, “Yes, I’m calling about the puppy video ... have you seen it ... that was wrong ... has he been charged ... he needs to be punished ... what are you, or the Marine Corps, going to do about it?”

I immediately give appropriate responses in order to keep the individual, a tax-paying civilian, abreast of the issue and what we, the Marine Corps, are doing to resolve the situation, while at the same time defending the honor of our beloved Marine Corps.

Thomas A. Edison’s great invention continues to ring, e-mail notifications are buzzing and popping up on my workstation, and my mobile phone has yet to reach room temperature from the last heated phone call I took a few moments ago.

I hope this gives you an idea of what not only my office is going through, but every public affairs office tied to the Marine

Corps, plus the office of the Secretary of the Defense and the White House.

It’s merely coincidence that I recently led a class about defending our beloved Marine Corps, and not in battle as many would think.

Three weeks ago I conducted professional military education on Lt. Gen. Victor H. Krulak’s book, “First to Fight, an Inside View of the U.S. Marine Corps,” to the Marines and civilian Marines in my shop. My class included Part I through the first chapter where it spoke of our Corps’ desperate attempt – and the political debacle that followed – for us to remain as a separate branch after the war of the greatest generation.

At the close of World War II, powerful military figures proposed a plan that would dissolve the Marine Corps into the other services and completely take away the functions of who we are and what we do.

On Feb. 23, 1945, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal exclaimed, “The raising of the flag atop Mt. Suribachi means there will be a Marine Corps for the next five hundred years,” while on the command ship Mt. Olympus after the news reached him.

After hearing this, Lt. Gen. Holland M. “Howlin’ Mad” Smith replied, away from Forrestal, “When the war is over and money is short they will be after the Marines again, and a dozen Iwo Jimas would make no difference.”

Smith’s foresight was evident after the long and arduous battles of WWII were over and the Marine Corps had to fight tooth and nail to prevent the proposal of a single chief of staff, military unification and survive as

an independent branch of military service. The most important objective in the storm from the Marine Corps’ perspective was that we needed the “... preservation of unquestioned civil authority over military affairs ...”

During this time, the War Department supported Senate bill S.2044, which sought to leave out virtually all civilian oversight over military affairs in order for them to have power over their own finances and control. General Alexander Vandegrift, 18th Commandant of the Marine Corps, delivered a crushing strike to this future merger of the military on May 10, 1946, that gained the grand effect he was looking for. As he addressed Congress, and declared that the 170 years of fighting the Marines had contributed to our country’s defense since 1775, he left the future of the Marine Corps in the hands of the convening legislative body which created it.

After further questioning and physical evidence regarding the threat of our existence, Congress refused to pass the proposed bill. General Vandegrift reached out to his audience and claimed another battle won for the Marine Corps on Capitol Hill. The reaction from the public, the press and Congress was immense and was overwhelming for President Harry Truman at the time.

The U. S. does not need a Marine Corps, as frustrating as it sounds. According to Krulak, we have a fine Army trained to fight on land and perform amphibious operations anywhere and our Air Force fights in the air and does it well.

Krulak said the American people believe in three things as

a result of the consistent conduct of our Corps. First, if there is a conflict with our country, the Marines will respond anywhere, ready to handle the situation and do it “yesterday.” Second, the people believe that Marines will be dramatically and decisively successful during wartime, bringing shock and awe to the enemy always. Third, our Corps is good for the manhood of our country by converting unoriented youths into proud, self-reliant citizens who can be trusted with our nation’s affairs.

The U. S. wants a Marine Corps beyond logic for those simple reasons. As long as we uphold these reasons, sustain our ‘train as we fight’ mentality, hold true to our core values of honor, courage and commitment, and convince our public we can successfully live up to these qualities, we are going to have a Marine Corps.

Just as easily, we can lose that Marine Corps mystique if our public loses their faith in us from failing to meet their high expectations and standards of Marines.

A few weeks ago Marines apparently violated that belief when a shocking and deplorable video made headlines in the media and on the internet, devastating the American public and putting a scar on the face of the Marine Corps.

Here we are again today, defending our Marine Corps – not in battle – but because of what the public sees and believes in their Marine Corps. As Marines, we must strive to better ourselves and each other by understanding, living and upholding the beliefs we hold true to our beloved Corps.

DEPARTS, from A-1

Sergeant Maj. Erik Shirreffs, sergeant major, Headquarters Battalion, MCB Hawaii, will temporarily take the duty of base sergeant major until the new sergeant major is named.

Fierle said he will miss working here and is excited to go to III MEF.

“If I could do a back flip I would,” he said. “But I can’t. I will miss working with the staff. It’s been a learning experience on both sides, from the chief of staff to the Marines I work with on a daily basis. It’s been a pleasure to be a part of the team – winning awards, chow hall, safety, environmental – and it’s not because of me, but the professionals I worked with.”

Fierle recalled some of his more memorable experiences like establishing housing, or working alongside the Navy so cohesively.

“Sitting on the design board team,” he said, “and establishing bonafied E-8, E-9, housing because the base never had any – it was a good opportunity, and long overdue. Having such a professional relationship with the Navy, to be one team, cohesive and professional – I attribute that to the service members. I also enjoyed getting the opportunity to welcome the Marines and Sailors back from their deployments, that was something I really enjoyed doing.”

Some of the improvements on base since he’s been here involve Marine Corps Community Services, specifically Operation Homefront, he said. Making sure the junior enlisted Marines had appropriate quarters to stay in is another.

“He was a champion for housing,” Shirreffs said. “All the way down to square footage of rooms – certainly one of his greatest legacies, and that’s one of the things, everything he touched was benefited. We benefited greatly to have him here.”

Fierle was proud to be a part of such a successful base.

“Having [MCB Hawaii] be a model for every other base says a lot,” Fierle said. “We must be doing something right.”

Fierle said he looked forward to getting with Lt. Gen. Richard Zilmer, commanding general, III MEF, finding out what his plans are for the MEF and supporting him, and just being the sergeant major for the Marines and Sailors.

“One thing I’ll miss,” he said, “is running at night with little light, and people I didn’t know saying, ‘hello sergeant major,’ or, ‘oorahh sergeant major.’ I appreciated that.”

Good dog gone



Courtesy photo

The base military police department lost one of their loyal working dogs March 15, after eleven years of service due to health issues. Monja, a Belgian Malinois, was stationed on Marine Corps Base Hawaii his whole life, working patrol and narcotics detection on base. He helped with random vehicle inspections, permissive authorized search and seizures of homes and vehicles, leading to multiple drug finds on base. “He displayed excellent discipline and loyalty,” said Monja’s 7th dog handler, Lance Cpl. Jordan Cler, military working dog handler, MCBH. “He was always happy and he always wanted to work.”

Weekend weather outlook

Today



Day — Isolated showers. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 80. East wind around 16 mph. Chance of precipitation is 20 percent.

Night — Scattered showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 69. East wind around 17 mph. Chance of precipitation is 30 percent.

High — 80

Low — 69

Saturday



Day — Scattered showers. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 80. East wind around 18 mph. Chance of precipitation is 30 percent.

Night — Scattered showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 69. East wind around 15 mph. Chance of precipitation is 30 percent.

High — 80

Low — 69

Sunday



Day — Scattered showers. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 80. East wind around 16 mph. Chance of precipitation is 30 percent.

Night — Scattered showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 69. East wind around 13 mph. Chance of precipitation is 30 percent.

High — 80

Low — 69



A squad of Marines conducts training at PTA's Range One, seeking cover behind the training area's rough terrain.

Rifle squad mission

Lava Dogs train as squads to prepare for deployment

Lance Cpl. Regina A. Ruisi
Combat Correspondent

POKAHULOA TRAINING AREA, Hawaii — Carrying a 92-pound combat load, Marines maneuver over rocky terrain, moving as a team under machine gun and mortar fire to reach, and engage, an objective.

On Range One at the Pohakuloa Training Area on the Big Island, Marines training for Iraq deployments move from individual and unit tactics to infantry assault tactics.

Marines from 2nd platoon, Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, rushed through the lava rock and bushes March 9.

“The range taught us that small unit leadership and individual action are paramount in the Marine Corps rifle squad,” said Pfc. Daniel Bennett, automatic rifleman, 2nd squad, 2nd platoon, Alpha Company, 1/3. “This was the first big range for fire movement with a squad.”

At the beginning of 1/3's PTA training, the Marines trained on various weapons systems', battle sight zeroing and qualifying on their weapons before moving to the “shoot house.” The first few days of training, the Marines focused on individual weapon's handling and qualification, and then moved to small unit leadership with fire team maneuvers. Finally, the

squad trained together on Range One.

“The range lets you focus on skills of controlling a team and squad,” said Lance Cpl. Anthony Richards, team leader, 2nd squad, 2nd platoon, Alpha Company, 1/3. “It's paramount in effectively employing your squad. I'm looking forward to training the new Marines to be at the level they need to be at before going to Iraq.”

While the terrain and tactics may not be realistic to combat in Iraq, the training helps prepare Marines for their upcoming deployment by helping them hone and sharpen their communication and teamwork skills.

“It helps squad and fire team leaders communicate well to make sure maneuvers are done correctly and make sure they are maximizing fire power,” said Capt. Chris Dellow, commanding officer, Alpha Company, 1/3. “The squad conducts a deliberate attack on a simulated dug-in fortified enemy position. The squad leader uses machine guns and mortars, as well as the squad, to obtain the objective.”

The squad leader is responsible for the fire teams on the ground as well as a team of machine gunners and mortar men firing 60mm mortars to repel the enemy assault until the squad is close enough to provide fire suppressing power.

The range is 500-meters long and 200 meters wide, making it a challenge for the

squad and fire team leaders to control the 12-man team while covering the entire area. The Marines conduct between two and five dry runs on the course before they're given any ammunition.

“By that point, you've explained everything you can,” said Chief Warrant Officer Craig Marshall, battalion gunner, 1/3. “The squad leader has to control the squad from the ‘lead from the front’ mentality. He has to know how to move in conjunction with his unit. The challenges lie on the squad leader, who has to control fire teams, and fire team leaders who have to ensure the Marines can move safely.”

Marines are continually concerned with safety while training at PTA, and the heavy amounts of gear carried and fast-paced movement of the range require safety issues to be of utmost importance. The range has position safety officers in orange vests, one per fire team, who ensure the Marines are maneuvering safely through the range.

“The range is a great learning experience because you have to learn to move quickly but safely,” said Lance Cpl. Jason Carbone, team leader, 2nd squad, 2nd platoon, Alpha Company, 1/3. “This range is about communication and leadership, getting the junior Marines prepared for anything that will come up in the future.”



Marines from 2nd squad, 2nd platoon, Alpha Company, 1/3, seek cover behind a tree during Range One at the PTA, March 9. Range One trains Marines in squad maneuvering tactics.



Marines from 2nd squad, 2nd platoon, Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, work as a team for the first time at Range One at the PTA March 9. The training encourages communication at the infantry rifle squad level, which will help the Marines prepare for an upcoming Iraq deployment.



A fire team leader with 2nd squad, 2nd platoon, Alpha Company, 1/3, shouts commands to his fire team to advance on an objective point at Range One at PTA March 9. Marines run over rough terrain with more than 90-pounds of gear to reach a simulated enemy location.



A Marine seeks cover amidst the lava rock and brush of the PTA terrain during squad-maneuvering tactics at Range One March 9. The training is meant to prepare the Marines at the squad level for combat, and enhance their leadership and communication skills for their upcoming Iraq deployment.



Marines rush an enemy objective point while an officer runs with them, observing their squad and fire team tactics at Range One at Pohakuloa Training Area March 9.

Photos by Lance Cpl. Regina A. Ruisi

Marines take on virtual battlefield

Sgt. Scott Whittington
U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific

Marines train in many different ways to be ready for any contingency, but for some Marines getting out to a live-fire range isn't always an easy task.

Another option in the Marine Corps training inventory is the Indoor Simulated Marksmanship Trainer. Without waiting on range quotas, support personnel, ammo and other components to a live-fire range, Marines can get down to training. This can be to enhance their shooting skills for their required annual rifle qualification, engage virtual enemy targets closing in on a Marine's position, or to practice room clearing techniques. There's multiple training scenarios for Marines.

"Marines should familiarize themselves with more weapon systems other than the M-16," said Staff Sgt. Jason Hazard, staff noncommissioned officer-in-charge, S-3. "We wanted to teach the Marines proper employment and application of the weapon systems."

Recently, Marines from Headquarters and Service Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific, sponsored by the battalion's training section, took two days from their regular job to fire various weapons systems on 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division's ISMT.

"It's just a big video game," said Cpl. Brent Lee, training noncommissioned officer, Headquarters and Support Bn., MarForPac. "It's great for sustaining marksmanship skills."

The ISMT opened here in 1997 and since then, thousands of Marines have used it. Also, Honolulu police officers and SWAT often use this facility.

During the last 11 years, the system has been occasionally enhanced to keep up with technology. Recently, upgrades to the system eliminated the need to connect the weapons to the system with cumbersome cords, using Bluetooth technology to make them wireless. Pressurized air is forced into the modified magazines, up to 3,400 pounds per square inch, giving the shooter 80-90 shots before the magazine has to be recharged. This gives the weapon its kick when fired.

"It feels way more realistic than the old system," said Cpl. Randall Holly, ISMT operator, 3rd Marine Regiment. "It's great not to have to deal with the cables, and shooters get a better feel for the weapon."

The Marine Corps ordered approximately 1,200 Bluefire simulators in 2006, and 3rd Marines has been training with the technology for the last eight months.

Marines who used their marksmanship skills in combat now use this new technology.



Corporal Randall Holly (left) demonstrates how to operate the modified .50 caliber machine gun in the 3rd Marine Regiment's Indoor Simulated Marksmanship Trainer Feb. 27. Marines from U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific practiced firing on the ISMT for two days, firing on a variety of courses and weapon systems.

"Nothing can get close to the real thing," Lee said. "But for training purposes, it's awesome."

Because firing on the range is an annual training requirement for most Marines, practicing the fundamentals is essential, according to Lance Cpl. Jason Metrolis, training noncommissioned officer,

Headquarters and Support Bn, MarForPac.

"Marines that don't shoot all the time would benefit a great deal from the ISMT," Metrolis said. "More Marines should sign up for events like this."

Attendance was lower than expected, however those who did attend got more out of the

training than expected.

"We fired more weapons than just the M-16," said Lance Cpl. Donald Wigglesworth, administrative clerk, Headquarters and Support Bn, MarForPac. "There may be a time when I'm standing next to a Marine who falls, and I'll need to pick up his weapon."

Hazard said later this year

the S-3 is sponsoring more training sessions. Marines will learn patrolling techniques, response to contact in a convoy and convoy operations.

"All Marines need to remain tactically proficient," Hazard said. "You never know when you'll need to use those basic skills."

ANA ETT 5-2 recalls experiences in Afghanistan

Compiled by
ANA ETT 5-2

MCBH, Kaneohe Bay

Embedded Training Team 5-2, comprised of individual augmentations from around base, deployed from here July 12, 2007, for a nine-month deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

They're serving as mentors and combat advisers to the soldiers of the Afghan National Army.

"This was deemed to be one of the most frustrating, but rewarding tours a Marine can do," said Master Gunnery Sgt. Douglas Thurston, staff non-commissioned officer-in-charge, ANA ETT 5-2. "This held true for everyone on our team."

To execute their duties, they're serving in some of the most volatile regions of Afghanistan, and had the opportunity to work with two kandaks, Afghan battalions.

"The first three months of the deployment occurred during the height of the summer fighting season, and we saw combat on an almost daily basis," said Maj. Bartholomew Battista, officer-in-charge, ETT 5-2.

On Oct. 2, 2007, one of the team's corpsmen, Petty Officer 3rd Class Mark Cannon, lost his life in a firefight in the Korengal Valley while providing care to a fellow ETT member, Sgt. Ian Parrish, who was shot in the neck and back while on patrol. Cannon's efforts, along with Army medics on scene, saved Parrish.

Following this, the team moved to Kabul, where they were assigned to the new 3rd Kandak, 2nd Brigade, 201st Corps, who were preparing to deploy to the same area of opera-



Master Gunnery Sgt. Douglas Thurston, staff non-commissioned officer-in-charge, Embedded Training Team 5-2, stands with an Afghan reconnaissance platoon after Operation Destined Siege in September 2007 in Chowkay Valley, Kunar, Afghanistan.

tion the team had just come from. A rigorous, three-month training cycle followed to prepare new soldiers and their leadership for the challenges of combat.

"Most of the soldiers were straight out of

boot camp, so we had only 90 days to train, organize and equip them for a combat deployment," Thurston said.

From July 2007 to present, ETT 5-2 and the ANA were involved in over 200 enemy engage-

ments, conducted over 1,000 combat patrols and participated in numerous named operations.

In addition, they provided an unprecedented amount of humanitarian assistance to the local populous, civil military operations, provided wells for water, roads for commerce, schools for children and hospitals for the sick and wounded, Thurston said.

"Winning the hearts and minds of the locals is key to the fight in Afghanistan, and these efforts greatly contributed toward that end," Battista said.

The efforts of the team wouldn't have been possible if it wasn't for the U.S. interpreters who acted as intermediaries between the team and the ANA, Thurston said.

"They truly represent what the people of Afghanistan are all about," Thurston said. "They not only provided great translation and cultural awareness to our team, but in doing so, they earned our trust, as we did theirs. We are proud to call each one of them our friend and ally."

Ready to return to the fight, the team returned to Central Konar in early February to finish their tour and prepare for their return to Hawaii.

"Working as an ETT can be the most challenging and rewarding work a Marine will ever do," Battista said. "The frustration of working with a culture that thinks differently and has different expectations of its military can drive a Marine crazy, but the opportunity to succeed in a nearly autonomous environment can provide the most satisfying accomplishments a Marine will ever feel. Despite the great satisfaction and success of our team, we're looking forward to coming home to family and friends."

High school student named Youth of the Year for MCBH

Press Release
Boys and Girls Club of America

She volunteered her time at the Special Olympics, the United States Postal Service Canned Food Drive, The Lokahi Giving Project and other military special events. She also volunteered at the local Parks and Recreation Summer Fun for two years as a junior leader contributing more than 500 hours, all before graduating high school. She's a sophomore at Pearl City High School, and her name is Marilyn Siquig.

At 16, Siquig was selected as Marine Corps Base Hawaii's Youth of the year. She was chosen to compete against other Boys & Girls Club members for the Hawaii Youth of the Year title and a \$1,000 scholarship from the Reader's Digest Foundation.

"Marilyn shows great character every day at the Manana Teen

Center, and is well respected by her peers and the staff," said Kristie Masuoka, Manana Youth Program Coordinator, Boys & Girls Club of Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Manana. "She is outgoing, friendly and always kind to new members."

As the Youth of the Year for MCB Hawaii, Siquig is among hundreds of local youth across the country recognized by Boys & Girls Clubs of America for her sound character, leadership skills and willingness to give back to the community.

Being named Youth of the Year is the highest honor a Boys & Girls Club member can receive. The title recognizes outstanding contributions to a member's family, school, community and Boys & Girls Club, as well as personal challenges and obstacles overcome.

As a sophomore at Pearl City High School, Siquig is a member of the Polynesian dance club and partici-

pated in Junior Varsity Wrestling as a freshman. Her goal is to study hard, graduate with honors and become a dentist.

"I have no doubt she will achieve the goals she sets for herself as well as be a positive role model for years to come," Masuoka said.

Siquig represented MCB Hawaii at the Hawaii Boys and Girls Club competition March 7. Carina Surface, Moanalua High School, won the state competition and will compete for the Pacific Region Youth of the Year and an additional \$10,000 scholarship.

The five regional winners will advance to Washington, D.C., in September to compete for the title of BGCA's National Youth of the Year. The National Youth of the Year receives an additional \$15,000 college scholarship and will be honored by the president in an Oval Office ceremony.



Three Marine Corps Base Hawaii Boys and Girls Club participants were recognized at a March 5 ceremony. Left to right: Patrick Pagador, Heather Zangari, and Marilyn Siquig were nominated as candidates for the national Youth of the Year Award. This marks the first year MCB Hawaii has had a candidate in the competition.



Lance Cpl. Regina A. Ruisi

Cadets from Waiakea High School's Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps ride out to infantry ranges and artillery firing points in a seven-ton truck while wearing flak jackets and Kevlars at Pohakuloa Training Area March 10. Marines from 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment and 1st Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, shared with the cadets the training they do here.

LEAGUE, from A-1

Marine Corps League commandant, Camp Tarawa Detachment.

Ear protection in and gear on, the audience watched the Marines send rounds downrange. Between fire missions, the Marines explained how the gun worked, and showed the visitors the different rounds and propellant the gun needed to fire.

“It’s good for them to see what Marines do,” said Staff Sgt. Jermaine Wilkerson, section chief, gun one, Battery B, 1/12. “They get to see the gun go ‘boom,’ see the operations out there, and they get to see we’re here for a purpose, to train in our military profession.”

After watching artillery fire, the visitors loaded up the vehicles and headed to Range 10 to see the infantry side of the Marine Corps.

At Range 10, Marines train at the platoon level, conducting platoon assaults with various weapons systems like the M16-A4 service rifle, M-240G medium machine gun and grenades. The visitors arrived at the range as Alpha Company,

1/3 trained and received instruction from the Marines on the different weapons systems.

The cadets, in flak jacket and Kevlar helmet, hiked up a mountain to a look-out point to watch Marines from 3rd platoon, Co. A., 1/3, run through the range. The hike up was the chance for the cadets to experience a little bit of what Marines go through in training.

“I think it’s good for the cadets to see this,” said Cpl. Justin Wood, sniper, Headquarters and Service Company, 1/3. “I didn’t get the opportunity to see anything about the Marine Corps until I had a recruiter. They get the chance to see what training is like, see what the Corps is all about.”

The purpose of the cadet’s trip to PTA was about providing future generations of Marines with the chance to see what the Marine Corps is about.

“We’ve talked to several Marines and Sailors out here who were former JROTC, and they said they didn’t have the chance to do this,” said Ken Hicks, naval science instructor and former master sergeant, Waiakea High School NJROTC. “A lot of the cadets will be in

these Marines’ shoes a few years from now, and that’s a good sign.”

The future of the Corps wasn’t all the Marines were focused on. The Marines were excited to share the current weapons systems with Marines who had fought with older models, and the former Marines were proud to share their stories from wars long past with the present Marines.

“It’s an honor to have the Marine Corps League out here,” Wood said. “These guys were in well before us, and I’m proud to have met them.”

The honors seemed to be one and the same between the Marines past and present, as the members of the Marine Corps League were excited and proud to be among the active duty Marines.

“Being out here with the troops is important,” Browne said. “We do this to show our support to the troops. It’s one thing to put a sticker on your car; it’s another to come out here, slap them on the back, talk to them, shake their hands and let them know you support them. We’re here to tell them to hang in there and wish them good luck on their next deployment.”

REMAINS, from A-1

cious cargo among them.

Slowly, silently, they walked in front of the formations. As they passed, the master of ceremonies gave the order to salute.

“It shouldn’t take this long to bring our people home, but at least they’re home,” said Jesse Baker, Vietnam Veterans’ Motorcycle club. “It was the luck of the draw over there. It could’ve well been me or others who didn’t come back alive.”

The honor guard made its way to the bus in silence, bearing the precious cargo before loading it in the back of a bus.

As the honor guard stepped

back and formed its own formation, more movement stirred within the back of the plane. Another honor guard carrying its flag-draped cargo started making its way toward the bus.

All through the hangar, silence continued as everyone, civilian and service members, paid their respects to four caskets that emerged from the aircraft. Each casket represented servicemen who gave their life for their country but didn’t come home until now.

“It’s motivating to know what they did for us and to know they aren’t forgotten,” said Cpl. Jaael Watson, S-4, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific. “We are bringing

them home, and we are showing our respect for them.”

After the final honor guard loaded the last casket aboard the bus, one lone trumpet resounded through the hangar as the final respects sounded for those aboard. The funeral dirge played amidst all those assembled, as the bus departed, heading toward the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command here.

The final notes echoed around the hangar, and the formations were dismissed, ending the ceremony.

Two cases brought home were associated with the Vietnam conflict. One came from the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, while the other came from the

Kingdom of Cambodia. Another case came from a World War II KIA in Palau, and the final case came from the Republic of Korea.

But for those who lost someone years ago, hope persists as each casket brought home contained the remnants of a fallen service member. Although it may take months or years for the identities of those in the caskets to be known, JPAC personnel continue to perform their jobs and will continue until all service members are returned home.

Each year, JPAC identifies an average of 100 Americans, returning them to their to be buried with full military honors on U.S. soil.

Training gone green

Marines respect protected natural, cultural area

Lance Cpl. Regina A. Ruisi

Combat Correspondent

POHAKULOA TRAINING AREA, Hawaii

— The seemingly barren, lava-strewn landscape of the Pohakuloa Training Area is more than a training sight for battle-bound Marines. The training area is, in reality, a rich cultural landscape that has played an important part in Hawaii’s history.

While Marines conduct training to protect America, an unseen force works daily to protect PTA’s natural and cultural resources. That force is the Natural and Cultural Resources Program here. With the help of PTA’s environmental staff, Marines training here are able to contribute to the protection and preservation of the training area.

“We make Marines and Sailors aware of what’s going on so they’re not destroying the natural habitat here,” said Col. Duffy White, commanding officer, 3rd Marine Regiment.

When the service members arrive to PTA, they receive a safety brief, where representatives from the Natural and Cultural Resources Program make them familiar with the conservation efforts and how training plays a part in it.

“The military is required, by law, to manage the area,” said Bill Godby, cultural resources program manager, United States Army Garrison, Hawaii. “The ranges, roads and training areas are all picked out to avoid impacts to archeological sites. They’ve all been identified as areas where no resources exist.”

The training area hosts

more than 300 archeological sites like caves, prehistoric trails and shrines that play a part in Hawaii’s history. To preserve these, the Marines work with the Natural and Cultural Resources Program to make sure training doesn’t interfere with preservation efforts. Troops are given designated firing points and ranges, as well as roads and routes designated to protect endangered plant species.

“In my seven years working here, I haven’t come across a time in which the Marines have impacted any sites,” Godby said. “The Marines do a good job in following our guidelines and respecting PTA’s preservation efforts.”

Not only do Marines stick to guidelines like staying on designated routes and not starting fires, Marines take the extra step of separating trash into groups like recyclable items, Meals, Ready to Eat packages and regular trash, doing their part to protect the environment.

“The Marines do a great job of getting their weapons and themselves ready to change positions quickly, but still, when they leave, there’s nothing left behind but tracks,” said Navy Lt. Brian Hill, battalion chaplain, 1st Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment. “They really clean up after themselves.”

Despite artillery fire and multiple weapon’s ranges, Marines do their part to avoid disturbing the archeological sites and in protecting the environment.

“Our goal is to provide good training and not destroy critical habitats here,” White said. “The main mission is to be good stewards of the environment.”

STATION, from A-1

“It’s very exciting,” said Matthew Newman, firefighter, Federal Fire Department, “because we can help support the facilities on base much better. When we were at the temporary fire station, it took awhile to respond, and every second matters when it comes to responding to calls. The least amount of time it takes is very important, and now since it’s next to headquarters, it’ll be much easier and that’s a priority because safety is very important.”

The previous fire station was not built to be a fire station, said Chuck Little, Deputy Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific.

“It was never intended to be a fire station,” Little said. “And it’s on the lower part of the base, and while it doesn’t take too long to respond, it did take some time and every second matters. Now they have a facility that was specifically designed from the ground up to be a fire station in a more centralized location, so it should be more efficient and responsive.”

AROUND THE CORPS

Marines return to Afghanistan

Cpl. Randall A. Clinton
24th MEU

KANDAHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Marines and Sailors from the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit began arriving in Afghanistan last week.

This deployment is in support and under the command of NATO's International Security Assistance Force. During this deployment the MEU will conduct full-spectrum operations to capitalize on recent ISAF and Afghan Nation Security Force successes in providing a safe and secure environment for the Afghan people in which to rebuild their lives.

“We will bring stability to that area. The locals will feel a little safer,” said Gunnery Sgt. Paul Crawford, company gunnery sergeant, Charlie Company, Battalion Landing Team, 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 24th MEU, ISAF.

Crawford cautioned about the immediacy of their impact. The 24th MEU is not expected to begin operations until the spring, giving the unit time to acclimatize and adjust for operations here.

The Marines of the ground combat element compare this deployment to their previous stint in Ramadi, Iraq, because once again they have a chance to improve the lives of those suffering from unruly insurgents.

“Helping kids, starting schools back up, helping the area, making it less dangerous for the people as opposed to the terrorists running free, doing as they please, not letting the people live a free life like they have a right to,” explained Cpl. Chase Sachs, tube-launched



Staff Sgt. Robert Piper

Marines with Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, sort through their gear after arriving earlier this week.

optically-tracked wire-guided missile vehicle gunner, Weapons Company, BLT, 1/6, 24th MEU, ISAF.

The battle-seasoned Marine, who operates a long-ranged, vehicle mounted missile system, wants his time in Afghanistan, like that of Iraq, to be remembered for the progress of the country more than trigger pulling; something positive he can tell his 2-year-old daughter about his service.

“We opened up more schools; you could see a drastic change from when we first got there. You see more kids in the schools, kids outside in the streets playing,” said Sachs of his tour in Ramadi.

Undoubtedly, the means to that end will come from the opposing end of the Marines’ rifles, a task they handled well in a 2004 deployment to Afghanistan.

“Obviously, last time 1/6 was here we made a big impact. Hopefully we will have more success this time,” said Crawford, a platoon sergeant during their four-month deployment in 2004.

The MEU represents the smallest unit in the U.S. mili-

tary combining air and ground combat assets and logistical support under one commander.

“The MEU is Marines and equipment capable to do a variety of missions; everything from limited objective raids to security operations, humanitarian assistant and disaster relief,” said Lt. Col. Matt Trollinger, operations officer, 24th MEU, ISAF.

Unlike a collection of separate units, the smaller MEU goes through their entire pre-deployment training as a collective whole.

“The three entities under the command element: a battalion, our aviation combat element, our combat logistics battalion, having worked together during that planning enables us to respond that much faster,” he explained.

That response ability was tested when the 24th MEU received the order to head directly to Afghanistan a mere month before their original deployment aboard Navy ships to act as a force-in-readiness in the Central Command theater of operations, and will continue to be tested as the MEU begins operations.